



The Defense Alliance of Minnesota Staff

(Left to Right: Kathy Neumann, Patria Lawton, Chip Laingen, Paul J. Wagner)

Minnesota SBA Honors Veteran Small Business Champion

SAINT PAUL – Defense Alliance of Minnesota has been named the Minnesota Veteran Small Business Champion of the Year for the U.S. Small Business Administration. The Defense Alliance is staffed by Paul J. Wagner, Founder; Commander Chip Laingen, U.S. Navy (Ret.), Director; Kathryn A. Neumann, Veterans Liaison; and Patria Lawton, Facilitator.

The Veterans Small Business Champion Award is presented annually in each state to individuals who have fulfilled a commitment to advancing small business opportunities for veterans of the U.S. armed forces.

The Defense Alliance of Minnesota is an independent organization founded in 2004. The mission of the Alliance is to network and expand Minnesota's defense and homeland security industries, to create and retain high quality jobs, and to further promote the state's important contributions of our men and women of the armed forces.

Integral to that effort is totally free support for:

- Veteran-owned business coaching and education on government contracting
- Job placement and search for Veterans
- Direct support to agencies and organizations dedicated to Veteran business and social services.

- Local and national advocacy for Veteran business and social services.

The Defense Alliance is an independent organization entirely funded by Minnesota Wire & Cable Co., and through fees at quarterly events. There are no membership fees for individual or corporate membership. The Alliance staff includes full and part time employees of Minnesota Wire & Cable Co., and volunteer “Facilitators” from outside the company. It is not a profit-making venture; as such, any excess revenues gained from events are used for service member support causes.

Within the two years of its existence, the Defense Alliance has grown to include over 200 registered small, medium and large businesses including dozens of small Veteran-owned businesses, state agencies and nonprofit organizations (including all of the state’s prime defense contractors such as Lockheed Martin, Alliant Techsystems and BAE Systems), and a wealth of high-tech, low-tech, manufacturing, academic and service members. The Defense Alliance has an additional affiliated 175-plus businesses and organizations and 2,000-plus individual members.

The operations of the Defense Alliance include quarterly membership events, such as a Veterans Business Resources Seminar to bring awareness to the many local and national resources available for Veterans in business, or who are planning to start one. They also produce a periodic electronic “Industry Brief” that includes new member highlights, industry trends, event notifications and defense and homeland security contracting awareness and education.

The Defense Alliance of Minnesota takes enormous pride in its overall mission of networking the state’s defense and homeland security industries – but most especially in its passionate efforts to support our nation’s Veterans, the businesses they run, and the non-Veteran businesses who employ them.

Wagner, Laingen, Neumann, and Lawton will be honored at a luncheon ceremony highlighting SBA’s Small Business Week winners on Friday, May 11, 2007, at the Northland Inn in Brooklyn Park.

For more information:

Charles W. Laingen
Defense Alliance of Minnesota
1835 Energy Park Drive
St. Paul, MN 55108
Phone 651-642-1800
Fax 651-642-9286
claingen@defensealliance.com